DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 390 782 SO 025 746

TITLE	A Gathering of Equals. A National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity. Reading Selections [and] Guide for Leaders.
INSTITUTION	Great Books Foundation, Chicago, IL.
SPONS AGENCY	National Endowment for the Humanities (NFAH), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	95
NOTE	60p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Great Books Foundation, 35 East Wacker Drive, Suite 2300, Chicago, IL 60601-2298.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - General (020) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Civil Liberties; *Civil Rights; Cultural Interrelationships; *Cultural Pluralism; Due Process; Equal Protection; *Freedom; Intercultural Communication; Intercultural Programs; *Justice; Multicultural Education; Racial Relations; Secondary Education; Social Attitudes; Social Studies; Sociocultural Patterns
IDENTIFIERS	Great Books Curriculum

ABSTRACT

This booklet contains texts of importance to all people with writings that have helped shape the U.S. identity. The texts are to serve as a springboard of discussion in a shared inquiry method of discussion of U.S. democracy. The documents in this volume include: (1) "The Declaration of Independence"; (2) "The United States Constitution: Preamble and Bill of Rights"; (3) "The Federalist #10 by James Madison"; (4) "Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address"; (5) "Letter from Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King, Jr.; and (6) "High School Graduation," from "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" by Maya Angelou. The guide is intended to help junior high and high school Great Books leaders enable their students to participate thoughtfully in "A Gathering of Equals: A National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity." By study and reflection on the project readings followed by discussion of ideas, the shared inquiry approach exemplifies the principles upon which democracy is founded. The interpretive reading, writing, and discussion activities suggested in this guide will aid in planning a teaching schedule. Questions for discussion encompass both interpretive and evaluative aspects of the text. A 19-item bibliography of pertinent secondary readings is included, as well as a list of overarching questions on U.S. pluralism and identity. (EH)

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A GATHERING OF EQUALS

A National Conversation on American pluralism and identity

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A GATHERING OF EQUALS

A National Conversation on American pluralism and identity

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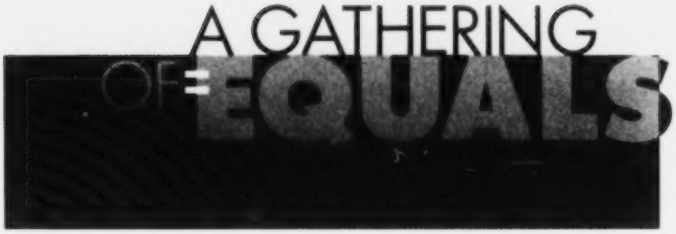

This booklet contains texts of importance to all Americans—writings that have helped shape the American identity. As a participant in **A Gathering of Equals**, you will have the opportunity to ask questions about these texts, share your ideas, and learn from the authors and each other.

WHY *A GATHERING OF EQUALS*?

Everyone in a democracy has a shared responsibility in its proper functioning. We need forums in which citizens exchange views with one another, not just with their elected leaders. Effective representation in government presupposes a citizenry that is fully engaged in a discourse on political and social issues.

America today lacks regular forums in which ordinary people come together to discuss important issues in a reasoned manner. Too often, public rhetoric is aimed at getting people to take sides, and issues become oversimplified and polarized. The success of democracy depends on a public discourse that is honest and respectful—an exploration of ideas among people of good will.

A Gathering of Equals has been organized to provide such a forum.

SHARED INQUIRY DISCUSSION— A MODEL FOR DEMOCRACY

The *shared inquiry* method of discussion provides a model for an open exchange of ideas on complex issues. Each discussion participant presents a unique perspective; ideas are explored cooperatively. Agreement need not be reached. As those experienced in the shared inquiry method know, it promotes respect for different points of view, openness to ideas that conflict with our own, and questioning that tests the internal consistency of a line of thought. Shared inquiry is a learning process that is both rigorous and inherently democratic.

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THE RULES OF SHARED INQUIRY DISCUSSION

During shared inquiry discussion, participants exchange their ideas freely, but do so within the framework of four simple rules. Adhering to these four rules keeps the quality of discussion high and enables all participants to engage with the selection as equals.

1. Only those who have read the selection may take part in discussion.

Shared inquiry discussion is a *text-based activity* in which participants rely on each other to broaden their understanding of the reading selection. Because each person has read and considered the selection individually, the entire group can move forward together in discovering new ideas.

2. Discuss only the selection everyone has read.

Shared inquiry focuses on the one text that has been chosen for discussion. Discussions of other texts, which perhaps not everyone has read, can place participants on an unequal footing and inhibit the free sharing of ideas.

3. Do not introduce outside opinions unless you can back them up with evidence from the selection.

In shared inquiry, it is *your* ideas that are important—not those of scholars or experts you may know of. Shared inquiry discussion is your opportunity for a direct, personal engagement with the text; your answers to the leader's questions about the selection are valid insofar as they are based on evidence the text provides.

4. Leaders may only ask questions; they may not answer them.

In shared inquiry, leaders pose questions that are real and open to them. They do not know the answers to the questions they ask, but seek the wisdom of the group in exploring them.

HOW TO APPROACH THE READINGS

Because shared inquiry is a cooperative exploration of a text, it is important that you read and think about the selection prior to discussion. Read the selection twice, allowing time between readings for reflection. Read with a pencil or pen in hand and take notes. Underline ideas that seem important. Make marginal comments about anything that puzzles you, or with which you strongly agree or disagree. Afterward, write down any questions you have about what you have read. Thinking about questions the selection raises in your mind is an excellent way to think it through and prepare to participate actively in discussion. The questions provided at the end of each selection can help you.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN YOUR DISCUSSIONS

Discussion groups will include about 15 people, with a person trained in the shared inquiry method serving as discussion leader. Discussion begins when the leader poses a fundamental question about the text that, after careful reading, continues to puzzle him or her. As you and other participants respond, the leader will follow up on your ideas, asking questions about how the responses relate to the original question and to the ideas put forward by the group. In shared inquiry, there are no experts. Each member of the group brings a unique perspective. By sharing your interpretations, you will discover new aspects of the work and deepen your understanding of it.

Throughout discussion, the leader will provide guidance only by careful questioning. Because the leader does not provide answers, participants are challenged to think for themselves. The leader will ask regularly for evidence (Where did you see that in the text? What in the text led you to that conclusion?) to give members of the group a way to assess the validity of the opinions offered. Following this method, participants give full consideration to the

ideas of others, weigh the merits of opposing opinions, and learn to modify their ideas as the evidence demands.

Discussion will focus primarily on interpretive questions—questions that help us understand the meaning of the work. Only after we have come to an understanding of the author can we responsibly evaluate or judge the work—how far it is true, or what it means to us today.

ABOUT THE GREAT BOOKS FOUNDATION AND ITS COUNCILS

Since 1947, the Great Books Foundation has provided people of all ages and walks of life with the opportunity to read, discuss, and learn from outstanding works of literature. Today, more than 800,000 students participate in Junior Great Books for grades K-12, and approximately 20,000 adults participate in Great Books discussion groups. Foundation instructors train an average of 17,000 people each year to lead discussions using the shared inquiry method.

Throughout the years, many people have attested that the intellectual exchange fostered by their discussion groups has been one of the most significant experiences of their lives. Numerous groups have continued to meet for more than 30 years. In several major cities, Great Books groups have been supported in their efforts by independent Great Books councils, who sponsor book discussion activities that reach out to everyone in the community.

A Gathering of Equals, funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities and coordinated by the Great Books Foundation, is made possible by the work and enthusiasm of the volunteer Great Books councils of Philadelphia, Chicago, and San Francisco. Their efforts over the years, involving people in discussions of excellent literature of all kinds, are a tribute to the determination of Americans to think for themselves, and to share their ideas as equals.

The Declaration of Independence

In Congress, July 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at

places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the meantime exposed to all the danger of invasion from without and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws of naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies without the consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the military independent of and superior to the civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing taxes on us without our consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury:

For transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offenses:

For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring Province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection and waging war against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow citizens taken captive on the high seas to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to

time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

WE, THEREFORE, the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by authority of the good people of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be FREE and INDEPENDENT STATES; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

Interpretive Questions

1. Why do the colonists feel a need to proclaim to the world their reasons for declaring independence?

2. Why do the signers of the Declaration think it is their duty, as well as their right, to change their system of government?

3. Why do the signers of the Declaration proclaim that the equality of all people is "self-evident" and their rights "unalienable"? Why do they maintain that democracy is ordained by the Laws of Nature?

4. Are the signers of the Declaration motivated by a sense of moral outrage, or by their own self-interest?

5. Why are the inhabitants of the thirteen colonies able to think of themselves as "one people"?

Evaluative Questions

1. Would you have signed the Declaration of Independence?

2. Does there come a time when violent revolt is justified?

3. Is democracy stronger when Americans think of themselves as "one people," or as many distinct groups of people?

The Constitution of the United States

PREAMBLE AND BILL OF RIGHTS

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Article I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Article II

A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

Article III

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Article IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Article V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

Article VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against

him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Article VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Article VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Article IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Article X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

Interpretive Questions

1. Why does the Constitution present rights as well as responsibilities? Do the authors of the Constitution intend for the rights of individuals to outweigh the common good?

2. Do the authors of the Constitution fear or desire a strong government?

3. Why do the authors of the Constitution present the rights of freedom of religion, speech, and assembly as paramount?

4. Why does the Constitution begin with the phrase "We the people"?

5. Does the Preamble's statement of purpose "to promote the general welfare" suggest that social legislation and programs are the responsibility of the government?

Evaluative Questions

1. Are the rights outlined in the Constitution "self-evident" or subject to change?

2. Should democracy place more trust in the will of "the people" or in explicit laws?

3. Do Americans today care more about their rights than their responsibilities as outlined in the Constitution?

The Federalist No. 10

JAMES MADISON

Among the numerous advantages promised by a well-constructed Union, none deserves to be more accurately developed than its tendency to break and control the violence of faction. The friend of popular governments never finds himself so much alarmed for their character and fate, as when he contemplates their propensity to this dangerous vice. He will not fail, therefore, to set a due value on any plan which, without violating the principles to which he is attached, provides a proper cure for it. The instability, injustice, and confusion introduced into the public councils have, in truth, been the mortal diseases under which popular governments have everywhere perished; as they continue to be the favorite and fruitful topics from which the adversaries to liberty derive their most specious declamations. The valuable improvements made by the American constitutions on the popular models, both ancient and modern, cannot certainly be too much admired; but it would be an unwarrantable partiality, to contend that they have as effectually obviated the danger on this side, as was wished and expected. Complaints are everywhere heard from our most considerate and virtuous citizens, equally the friends of public and private faith, and of public and personal liberty, that our governments are too unstable, that the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties, and that measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority. However anxiously we may wish that these complaints had no foundation, the evidence of known facts will not permit us to deny that they are in some degree true. It will be found, indeed, on a candid review of our situation, that some of the distresses under which we labor have been erroneously charged on the operation of our governments; but it will be found, at the same time, that other causes will not alone account for many of our heaviest misfortunes; and, particularly, for that prevailing and increasing distrust of public engagements, and alarm for private rights, which are echoed from one end of the continent to the other. These must be chiefly, if not wholly, effects of the unsteadiness and injustice with which a factious spirit has tainted our public administrations.

By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.

In a series of newspaper essays published during 1787 and 1788, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison sought to persuade their readers to support the proposed Constitution during the struggle over ratification. In essay No. 10, Madison considers the violence of opposing factions among the people to be a chief danger to democracy, and explains how the proposed Constitution is unique in diffusing this threat without compromising liberty.

There are two methods of curing the mischiefs of faction: the one, by removing its causes; the other, by controlling its effects.

There are again two methods of removing the causes of faction: the one, by destroying the liberty which is essential to its existence; the other, by giving to every citizen the same opinions, the same passions, and the same interests.

It could never be more truly said than of the first remedy, that it was worse than the disease. Liberty is to faction what air is to fire, an aliment without which it instantly expires. But it could not be less folly to abolish liberty, which is essential to political life, because it nourishes faction, than it would be to wish the annihilation of air, which is essential to animal life, because it imparts to fire its destructive agency.

The second expedient is as impracticable as the first would be unwise. As long as the reason of man continues fallible, and he is at liberty to exercise it, different opinions will be formed. As long as the connection subsists between his reason and his self-love, his opinions and his passions will have a reciprocal influence on each other; and the former will be objects to which the latter will attach themselves. The diversity in the faculties of men, from which the rights of property originate, is not less an insuperable obstacle to a uniformity of interests. The protection of these faculties is the first object of government. From the protection of different and unequal faculties of acquiring property, the possession of different degrees and kinds of property immediately results; and from the influence of these on the sentiments and views of the respective proprietors, ensues a division of the society into different interests and parties.

The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man; and we see them everywhere brought into different degrees of activity, according to the different circumstances of civil society. A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government, and many other points, as well of speculation as of practice; an attachment to different leaders ambitiously contending for pre-eminence and power; or to persons of other descriptions whose fortunes have been interesting to the human passions, have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to cooperate for their common good. So strong is this propensity of mankind to fall into mutual animosities, that where no substantial occasion presents itself, the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions and excite their most violent conflicts. But the most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society. Those who are creditors, and those who are debtors, fall under a like discrimination. A landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a moneyed interest, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations, and divide them into different classes, actuated by different sentiments and views. The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation, and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of the government.

No man is allowed to be a judge in his own cause, because his interest would certainly bias his judgment, and, not improbably, corrupt his integrity. With equal, nay with greater reason, a body of men are unfit to be both judges and parties at the same time; yet what are many of the most important acts of legislation, but so many judicial determinations, not indeed concerning the rights of single persons, but concerning the rights of large bodies of citizens? And what are the different classes of legislators but advocates and parties to the causes which they determine? Is a law proposed concerning private debts? It is a question to which the creditors are parties on one side and the debtors on the other. Justice ought to hold the balance between them. Yet the parties are, and must be, themselves the judges; and the most numerous party, or, in other words, the most powerful faction must be

expected to prevail. Shall domestic manufactures be encouraged, and in what degree, by restrictions on foreign manufactures? are questions which would be differently decided by the landed and the manufacturing classes, and probably by neither with a sole regard to justice and the public good. The apportionment of taxes on the various descriptions of property is an act which seems to require the most exact impartiality; yet there is, perhaps, no legislative act in which greater opportunity and temptation are given to a predominant party to trample on the rules of justice. Every shilling with which they overburden the inferior number, is a shilling saved to their own pockets.

It is in vain to say that enlightened statesmen will be able to adjust these clashing interests, and render them all subservient to the public good. Enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm. Nor, in many cases, can such an adjustment be made at all without taking into view indirect and remote considerations, which will rarely prevail over the immediate interest which one party may find in disregarding the rights of another or the good of the whole.

The inference to which we are brought is, that the *causes* of faction cannot be removed, and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its *effects*.

If a faction consists of less than a majority, relief is supplied by the republican principle, which enables the majority to defeat its sinister views by regular vote. It may clog the administration, it may convulse the society; but it will be unable to execute and mask its violence under the forms of the Constitution. When a majority is included in a faction, the form of popular government, on the other hand, enables it to sacrifice to its ruling passion or interest both the public good and the rights of other citizens. To secure the public good and private rights against the danger of such a faction, and at the same time to preserve the spirit and the form of popular government, is then the great object to which our inquiries are directed. Let me add that it is the great desideratum by which this form of government can be rescued from the opprobrium under which it has so long labored, and be recommended to the esteem and adoption of mankind.

By what means is this object attainable? Evidently by one of two only. Either the existence of the same passion or interest in a majority at the same time must be prevented, or the majority, having such coexistent passion or interest, must be rendered, by their number and local situation, unable to concert and carry into effect schemes of oppression. If the impulse and the opportunity be suffered to coincide, we well know that neither moral nor religious motives can be relied on as an adequate control. They are not found to be such on the injustice and violence of individuals, and lose their efficacy in proportion to the number combined together, that is, in proportion as their efficacy becomes needful.

From this view of the subject it may be concluded that a pure democracy, by which I mean a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person, can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction. A common passion or interest will, in almost every case, be felt by a majority of the whole; a communication and concert result from the form of government itself; and there is nothing to check the inducements to sacrifice the weaker party or an obnoxious individual. Hence it is that such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths. Theoretic politicians, who have patronized this species of government, have erroneously supposed that by reducing mankind to a perfect equality in their political rights, they would, at the same time, be perfectly equalized and assimilated in their possessions, their opinions, and their passions.

A republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place, opens a different prospect, and promises the cure for which we are seeking. Let us examine the points in which it varies from pure democracy, and we

shall comprehend both the nature of the cure and the efficacy which it must derive from the Union.

The two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic are: first, the delegation of the government, in the latter, to a small number of citizens elected by the rest; secondly, the greater number of citizens, and greater sphere of country, over which the latter may be extended.

The effect of the first difference is, on the one hand, to refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations. Under such a regulation, it may well happen that the public voice, pronounced by the representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good than if pronounced by the people themselves, convened for the purpose. On the other hand, the effect may be inverted. Men of factious tempers, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs, may, by intrigue, by corruption, or by other means, first obtain the suffrages, and then betray the interests, of the people. The question resulting is, whether small or extensive republics are most favorable to the election of proper guardians of the public weal; and it is clearly decided in favor of the latter by two obvious considerations:

In the first place, it is to be remarked that, however small the republic may be, the representatives must be raised to a certain number, in order to guard against the cabals of a few; and that, however large it may be, they must be limited to a certain number, in order to guard against the confusion of a multitude. Hence, the number of representatives in the two cases not being in proportion to that of the two constituents, and being proportionally greater in the small republic, it follows that, if the proportion of fit characters be not less in the large than in the small republic, the former will present a greater option, and consequently a greater probability of a fit choice.

In the next place, as each representative will be chosen by a greater number of citizens in the large than in the small republic, it will be more difficult for unworthy candidates to practice with success the vicious arts by which elections are too often carried; and the suffrages of the people being more free, will be more likely to center in men who possess the most attractive merit and the most diffusive and established characters.

It must be confessed that in this, as in most other cases, there is a mean, on both sides of which inconveniences will be found to lie. By enlarging too much the number of electors, you render the representative too little acquainted with all their local circumstances and lesser interests; as by reducing it too much, you render him unduly attached to these, and too little fit to comprehend and pursue great and national objects. The federal Constitution forms a happy combination in this respect; the great and aggregate interests being referred to the national, the local and particular to the State legislatures.

The other point of difference is, the greater number of citizens and extent of territory which may be brought within the compass of republican than of democratic government; and it is this circumstance principally which renders factious combinations less to be dreaded in the former than in the latter. The smaller the society, the fewer probably will be the distinct parties and interests composing it; the fewer the distinct parties and interests, the more frequently will a majority be found of the same party; and the smaller the number of individuals composing a majority, and the smaller the compass within which they are placed, the more easily will they concert and execute their plans of oppression. Extend the sphere, and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength, and to act in unison with each other. Besides other impediments, it may be remarked that, where there is a consciousness of unjust or dishonorable purposes, communication is always checked by distrust in proportion to the number

whose concurrence is necessary.

Hence, it clearly appears, that the same advantage which a republic has over a democracy, in controlling the effects of faction, is enjoyed by a large over a small republic—is enjoyed by the Union over the States composing it. Does the advantage consist in the substitution of representatives whose enlightened views and virtuous sentiments render them superior to local prejudices and to schemes of injustice? It will not be denied that the representation of the Union will be most likely to possess these requisite endowments. Does it consist in the greater security afforded by a greater variety of parties, against the event of any one party being able to outnumber and oppress the rest? In an equal degree does the increased variety of parties comprised within the Union increase this security? Does it, in fine, consist in the greater obstacles opposed to the concert and accomplishment of the secret wishes of an unjust and interested majority? Here, again, the extent of the Union gives it the most palpable advantage.

The influence of factious leaders may kindle a flame within their particular States, but will be unable to spread a general conflagration through the other States. A religious sect may degenerate into a political faction in a part of the Confederacy; but the variety of sects dispersed over the entire face of it must secure the national councils against any danger from that source. A rage for paper money, for an abolition of debts, for an equal division of property, or for any other improper or wicked project, will be less apt to pervade the whole body of the Union than a particular member of it; in the same proportion as such a malady is more likely to taint a particular county or district, than an entire State.

In the extent and proper structure of the Union, therefore, we behold a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government. And according to the degree of pleasure and pride we feel in being republicans, ought to be our zeal in cherishing the spirit and supporting the character of Federalists.

PUBLIUS

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Interpretive Questions

1. According to Madison, is the ultimate cause of factionalism the "unequal distribution of property" or the natural "propensity of mankind to fall into mutual animosities"?

2. Would Madison consider modern political parties a means of strengthening or of controlling faction?

3. Why are the people more capable of choosing representatives than deciding policies firsthand?

4. Does Madison think that citizens in a democracy are unable to come together to work for the cause of justice?

5. What would Madison think of **A Gathering of Equals?**

Evaluative Questions

1. Is the public good today "disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties"?

2. Are appeals to the conscience rather than to the self-interest of the majority an effective way to achieve lasting social change?

3. To whom does a person owe loyalty in a pluralistic America—to his or her cultural group, state, or nation?

Second Inaugural Address

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

March 4, 1865

At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention, and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil-war. All dreaded it—all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to *saving* the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to *destroy* it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would *make* war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would *accept* war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war, the magnitude, or the duration, which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the *cause* of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh!" If we shall suppose that American Slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North

and South, this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a Living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bond-man's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to the finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.

Interpretive Questions

1. Why does Lincoln take up the attitude of "judge not that we be not judged," even though he believes slavery to have been an offense to God?

2. Why doesn't Lincoln feel triumphant regarding the successful course of the war? Why does he avoid calling for vengeance?

3. According to Lincoln, did the North "accept" war because of its wish to preserve the Union, or because of its abhorrence of slavery?

4. Does Lincoln blame the South for causing the war? Why does Lincoln point out that "the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement" of slavery?

5. According to Lincoln, why were people who had so much in common—even praying to the same God—unable to avoid such a terrible conflict?

Evaluative Questions

1. Are Americans as deeply divided today as in the time of Lincoln?

2. Would Americans go to war today to preserve the Union from division?

3. Is it time for Americans to forgive each other for past wrongs, and "judge not that we be not judged"?

Letter from Birmingham Jail

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

April 16, 1963

My Dear Fellow Clergymen:

While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities "unwise and untimely." Seldom do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything other than such correspondence in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and that your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I want to try to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

I think I should indicate why I am here in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the view which argues against "outsiders coming in." I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. We have some eighty-five affiliated organizations across the South, and one of them is the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. Frequently we share staff, educational, and financial resources with our affiliates. Several months ago the affiliate here in Birmingham asked us to be on call to engage in a nonviolent direct-action program if such were deemed necessary. We readily consented, and when the hour came we lived up to our promise. So I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties here.

But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and, just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco-Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: This response to a published statement by eight fellow clergymen from Alabama (Bishop C. C. J. Carpenter, Bishop Joseph A. Durick, Rabbi Hilton L. Grafman, Bishop Paul Hardin, Bishop Holan B. Harmon, the Reverend George M. Murray, the Reverend Edward V. Ramage and the Reverend Earl Stallings) was composed under somewhat constricting circumstances. Begun on the margins of the newspaper in which the statement appeared while I was in jail, the letter was continued on scraps of writing paper supplied by a friendly Negro trusty, and concluded on a pad my attorneys were eventually permitted to leave me. Although the text remains in substance unaltered, I have indulged in the author's prerogative of polishing it for publication.

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.

You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city's white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action. We have gone through all these steps in Birmingham. There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. An ugly record of brutality is widely known. Negroes have experienced grossly unjust treatment in the courts. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. These are the hard brutal facts of the case. On the basis of these conditions, Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the latter consistently refused to engage in good-faith negotiation.

Then, last September, came the opportunity to talk with leaders of Birmingham's economic community. In the course of the negotiations, certain promises were made by the merchants—for example, to remove the stores' humiliating racial signs. On the basis of these promises, the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to a moratorium on all demonstrations. As the weeks and months went by, we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. A few signs, briefly removed, returned; the others remained.

As in so many past experiences, our hopes had been blasted, and the shadow of deep disappointment settled upon us. We had no alternative except to prepare for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and the national community. Mindful of the difficulties involved, we decided to undertake a process of self-purification. We began a series of workshops on nonviolence, and we repeatedly asked ourselves: "Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?" "Are you able to endure the ordeal of jail?" We decided to schedule our direct-action program for the Easter season, realizing that except for Christmas, this is the main shopping period of the year. Knowing that a strong economic-withdrawal program would be the by-product of direct action, we felt that this would be the best time to bring pressure to bear on the merchants for the needed change.

Then it occurred to us that Birmingham's mayoralty election was coming up in March, and we speedily decided to postpone action until after election day. When we discovered that the Commissioner of Public Safety, Eugene "Bull" Connor, had piled up enough votes to be in the run-off, we decided again to postpone action until the day after the run-off so that the demonstrations could not be used to cloud the issues. Like many others, we waited to see Mr. Connor defeated, and to this end we endured postponement after postponement. Having aided in this community need, we felt that our direct-action program could be delayed no longer.

You may well ask "Why direct action? Why sit-ins, marches, and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are quite right in calling for negotiation.

Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks to so dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent-resister may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word "tension." I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood.

The purpose of our direct-action program is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue.

One of the basic points in your statement is that the action that I and my associates have taken in Birmingham is untimely. Some have asked: "Why didn't you give the new city administration time to act?" The only answer that I can give to this query is that the new Birmingham administration must be prodded about as much as the outgoing one, before it will act. We are sadly mistaken if we feel that the election of Albert Boutwell as mayor will bring the millennium to Birmingham. While Mr. Boutwell is a much more gentle person than Mr. Connor, they are both segregationists, dedicated to maintenance of the status quo. I have hope that Mr. Boutwell will be reasonable enough to see the futility of massive resistance to desegregation. But he will not see this without pressure from devotees of civil rights. My friends, I must say to you that we have not made a single gain in civil rights without determined legal and nonviolent pressure. Lamentably, it is an historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but, as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups tend to be more immoral than individuals.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct-action campaign that was "well-timed" in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that "justice too long delayed is justice denied."

We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God-given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at horse-and-buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son who is asking:

"Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross-county drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are), and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness"—then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.

You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, at first glance it may seem rather paradoxical for us consciously to break laws. One may well ask: "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all."

Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. Segregation, to use the terminology of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, substitutes an "I-it" relationship for an "I-thou" relationship and ends up relegating persons to the status of things. Hence segregation is not only politically, economically, and sociologically unsound, it is morally wrong and sinful. Paul Tillich has said that sin is separation. Is not segregation an existential expression of man's tragic separation, his awful estrangement, his terrible sinfulness? Thus it is that I can urge men to obey the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court, for it is morally right; and I can urge them to disobey segregation ordinances, for they are morally wrong.

Let us consider a more concrete example of just and unjust laws. An unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself. This is *difference* made legal. By the same token, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and that it is willing to follow itself. This is *sameness* made legal.

Let me give another explanation. A law is unjust if it is inflicted on a minority that, as a result of being denied the right to vote, had no part in enacting or devising the law. Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up that state's segregation laws was democratically elected? Throughout Alabama all sorts of devious methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters, and there are some counties in which even though Negroes constitute a majority of the population, not a single Negro is registered. Can any law enacted under such circumstances be considered democratically structured?

Sometimes a law is just on its face and unjust in its application. For instance, I have been arrested on a charge of parading without a permit. Now, there is

nothing wrong in having an ordinance which requires a permit for a parade. But such an ordinance becomes unjust when it is used to maintain segregation and to deny citizens the First-Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest.

I hope you are able to see the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was evidenced sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that a higher moral law was at stake. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks rather than submit to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience. In our own nation, the Boston Tea Party represented a massive act of civil disobedience.

We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal." It was "illegal" to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany. Even so, I am sure that, had I lived in Germany at the time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers. If today I lived in a Communist country where certain principles dear to the Christian faith are suppressed, I would openly advocate disobeying that country's anti-religious laws.

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.

In your statement you assert that our actions, even though peaceful, must be condemned because they precipitate violence. But is this a logical assertion? Isn't this like condemning a robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the

evil act of robbery? Isn't this like condemning Socrates because his unswerving commitment to truth and his philosophical inquiries precipitated the act by the misguided populace in which they made him drink hemlock? Isn't this like condemning Jesus because his unique God-consciousness and never-ceasing devotion to God's will precipitated the evil act of crucifixion? We must come to see that, as the federal courts have consistently affirmed, it is wrong to urge an individual to cease his efforts to gain his basic constitutional rights because the quest may precipitate violence. Society must protect the robbed and punish the robber.

I had also hoped that the white moderate would reject the myth concerning time in relation to the struggle for freedom. I have just received a letter from a white brother in Texas. He writes: "All Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but it is possible that you are in too great a religious hurry. It has taken Christianity almost two thousand years to accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth." Such an attitude stems from a tragic misconception of time, from the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Actually, time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be coworkers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.

You speak of our activity in Birmingham as extreme. At first I was rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist. I began thinking about the fact that I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency, made up in part of Negroes who, as a result of long years of oppression, are so drained of self-respect and a sense of "somebodiness" that they have adjusted to segregation; and in part of a few middle-class Negroes who, because of a degree of academic and economic security and because in some ways they profit by segregation, have become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred, and it comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up across the nation, the largest and best-known being Elijah Muhammad's Muslim movement. Nourished by the Negro's frustration over the continued existence of racial discrimination, this movement is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man is an incorrigible "devil."

I have tried to stand between these two forces, saying that we need emulate neither the "do-nothingism" of the complacent nor the hatred and despair of the black nationalist. For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. I am grateful to God that, through the influence of the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle.

If this philosophy had not emerged, by now many streets of the South would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood. And I am further convinced that if our white brothers dismiss as "rabble-rousers" and "outside agitators" those of us who employ nonviolent direct action, and if they refuse to support our nonviolent efforts, millions of Negroes will, out of frustration and despair, seek solace and security in black-nationalist ideologies—a development that would inevitably lead to a frightening racial nightmare.

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded *him of his birthright of freedom*, and something without has reminded him that it can be gained. Consciously or unconsciously, he has been caught up by the *Zeitgeist*, and with his black brothers of Africa and his brown and yellow brothers of Asia, South America, and the Caribbean, the United States Negro is moving with a sense of great urgency toward the promised land of racial justice. If one recognizes this vital urge that has engulfed the Negro community, one should readily understand why public demonstrations are taking place. The Negro has many pent-up resentments and latent frustrations, and he must release them. So let him march; let him make prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; let him go on freedom rides—and try to understand why he must do so. If his repressed emotions are not released in nonviolent ways, they will seek expression through violence; this is not a threat but a fact of history. So I have not said to my people: "Get rid of your discontent." Rather, I have tried to say that this normal and healthy discontent can be channeled into the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action. And now this approach is being termed extremist.

But though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label. Was not Jesus an extremist for love: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Was not Amos an extremist for justice: "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." Was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Was not Martin Luther an extremist: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God." And John Bunyan: "I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience." And Abraham Lincoln: "This nation cannot survive half slave and half free." And Thomas Jefferson: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. . . ." So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary's hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime—the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their environment. The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth, and goodness, and thereby rose above his environment. Perhaps the South, the nation, and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.

I had hoped that the white moderate would see this need. Perhaps I was too optimistic; perhaps I expected too much. I suppose I should have realized that few members of the oppressor race can understand the deep groans and passionate yearnings of the oppressed race, and still fewer have the vision to see that injustice must be rooted out by strong, persistent, and determined action. I am thankful, however, that some of our white brothers in the South have grasped the meaning of this social revolution and committed themselves to it. They are still too few in quantity, but they are big in quality. Some—such as Ralph McGill, Lillian Smith, Harry Golden, James McBride Dabbs, Ann Braden, and Sarah Patton Boyle—have written about our struggle in eloquent and prophetic terms. Others have marched with us down nameless streets of the South. They have languished in filthy, roach-infested jails, suffering the abuse and brutality of policemen who view them as "dirty nigger-lovers." Unlike so many of their moderate brothers and sisters, they have recognized the urgency of the moment and sensed the need for powerful "action" antidotes to combat the disease of segregation.

Let me take note of my other major disappointment. I have been so greatly disappointed with the white church and its leadership. Of course, there are some notable exceptions. I am not unmindful of the

fact that each of you has taken some significant stands on this issue. I commend you, Reverend Stallings, for your Christian stand on this past Sunday, in welcoming Negroes to your worship service on a nonsegregated basis. I commend the Catholic leaders of this state for integrating Spring Hill College several years ago.

But despite these notable exceptions, I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church. I do not say this as one of those negative critics who can always find something wrong with the church. I say this as a minister of the gospel, who loves the church; who was nurtured in its bosom; who has been sustained by its spiritual blessings and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen.

When I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama, a few years ago, I felt we would be supported by the white church. I felt that the white ministers, priests, and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies. Instead, some have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained-glass windows.

In spite of my shattered dreams, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership of this community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern, would serve as the channel through which our just grievances could reach the power structure. I had hoped that each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed.

I have heard numerous southern religious leaders admonish their worshipers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers declare: "Follow this decree because integration is morally right and because the Negro is your brother." In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churchmen stand on the sideline and mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard many ministers say: "Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern." And I have watched many churches commit themselves to a completely other-worldly religion which makes a strange, un-Biblical distinction between body and soul, between the sacred and the secular.

I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi, and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious-education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: "What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where were their voices when the lips of Governor Barnett dripped with words of interposition and nullification? Where were they when Governor Wallace gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest?"

Yes, these questions are still in my mind. In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church. But be assured that my tears have been tears of love. There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love. Yes, I love the church. How could I do otherwise? I am in the rather unique position of being the son, the grandson, and the great-grandson of preachers. Yes, I see the church as the body of Christ. But, oh! How we have blemished and scarred that body through social neglect and through fear of being nonconformists.

There was a time when the church was very powerful—in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power

became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being "disturbers of the peace" and "outside agitators." But the Christians pressed on, in the conviction that they were "a colony of heaven," called to obey God rather than man. Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be "astronomically intimidated." By their effort and example they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests.

Things are different now. So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an archdefender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent—and often even vocal—sanction of things as they are.

But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust.

Perhaps I have once again been too optimistic. Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world? Perhaps I must turn my faith to the inner spiritual church, the church within the church, as the true *ekklesia* and the hope of the world. But again I am thankful to God that some noble souls from the ranks of organized religion have broken loose from the paralyzing chains of conformity and joined us as active partners in the struggle for freedom. They have left their secure congregations and walked the streets of Albany, Georgia, with us. They have gone down the highways of the South on tortuous rides for freedom. Yes, they have gone to jail with us. Some have been dismissed from their churches, have lost the support of their bishops and fellow ministers. But they have acted in the faith that right defeated is stronger than evil triumphant. Their witness has been the spiritual salt that has preserved the true meaning of the gospel in these troubled times. They have carved a tunnel of hope through the dark mountain of disappointment.

I hope the church as a whole will meet the challenge of this decisive hour. But even if the church does not come to the aid of justice, I have no despair about the future, I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives are at present misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with America's destiny. Before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson etched the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence across the pages of history, we were here. For more than two centuries our forebears labored in this country without wages; they made cotton king; they built the homes of their masters while suffering gross injustice and shameful humiliation—and yet out of a bottomless vitality they continued to thrive and develop. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands.

Before closing I feel impelled to mention one other point in your statement that has troubled me profoundly. You warmly commended the Birmingham police force for keeping "order" and "preventing violence." I doubt that you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its dogs sinking their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent Negroes. I doubt that you would so quickly commend the policemen if you were to observe their ugly and inhumane treatment of Negroes here in the city jail; if you were to watch them push and curse old Negro women and young Negro girls; if you were to see them slap and kick old Negro men and young boys; if you were to observe them as they did on two occasions, refuse to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together. I

cannot join you in your praise of the Birmingham police department.

It is true that the police have exercised a degree of discipline in handling the demonstrators. In this sense they have conducted themselves rather "nonviolently" in public. But for what purpose? To preserve the evil system of segregation. Over the past few years I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. I have tried to make clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or perhaps even more so, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends. Perhaps Mr. Connor and his policemen have been rather nonviolent in public, as was Chief Pritchett in Albany, Georgia, but they have used the moral means of nonviolence to maintain the immoral end of racial injustice. As T. S. Eliot has said: "The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason."

I wish you had commended the Negro sitinners and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer and their amazing discipline in the midst of great provocation. One day the South will recognize its real heroes. They will be the James Merediths, with the noble sense of purpose that enables them to face jeering and hostile mobs, and with the agonizing loneliness that characterizes the life of the pioneer. They will be old, oppressed, battered Negro women, symbolized in a seventy-two-year-old woman in Montgomery, Alabama, who rose up with a sense of dignity and with her people decided not to ride segregated buses, and who responded with ungrammatical profundity to one who inquired about her weariness: "My feet is tired, but my soul is at rest." They will be the young high school and college students, the young ministers of the gospel and a host of their elders, courageously and nonviolently sitting in at lunch counters and willingly going to jail for conscience' sake. One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judaeo-Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Never before have I written so long a letter. I'm afraid it is much too long to take your precious time. I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else can one do when he is alone in a narrow jail cell, other than write long letters, think long thoughts, and pray long prayers?

If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me.

I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for me to meet each of you, not as an integrationist or a civil-rights leader but as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother. Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our feardrenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Interpretive Questions

1. Why is most of the white community, including the clergy, blind to the justice of Dr. King's protest? What does Dr. King hope to accomplish by writing his letter?

2. Why is Dr. King committed to *nonviolent* direct action?

3. Why does Dr. King think that if one breaks an unjust law, he or she must do so openly and "lovingly"?

4. Why is Dr. King confident that "national opinion" will expose the injustice he faces?

5. Why does Dr. King find it especially difficult to explain racism to children?

Evaluative Questions

1. Is Dr. King right that a people must demand their rights because "freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor"?

2. Can different peoples ever fully trust and understand one another while maintaining their distinct identities?

3. Are moderates or extremists the greater impediment to achieving social justice?

High School Graduation

MAYA ANGELOU

The children in Stamps[1] trembled visibly with anticipation. Some adults were excited too, but to be certain the whole young population had come down with graduation epidemic. Large classes were graduating from both the grammar school and the high school. Even those who were years removed from their own day of glorious release were anxious to help with preparations as a kind of dry run. The junior students who were moving into the vacating classes' chairs were tradition-bound to show their talents for leadership and management. They strutted through the school and around the campus exerting pressure on the lower grades. Their authority was so new that occasionally if they pressed a little too hard it had to be overlooked. After all, next term was coming, and it never hurt a sixth grader to have a play sister in the eighth grade, or a tenth-year student to be able to call a twelfth grader Bubba. So all was endured in a spirit of shared understanding. But the graduating classes themselves were the nobility. Like travelers with exotic destinations on their minds, the graduates were remarkably forgetful. They came to school without their books, or tablets, or even pencils. Volunteers fell over themselves to secure replacements for the missing equipment. When accepted, the willing workers might or might not be thanked, and it was of no importance to the pregraduation rites. Even teachers were respectful of the now quiet and aging seniors, and tended to speak to them, if not as equals, as beings only slightly lower than themselves. After tests were returned and grades given, the student body, which acted like an extended family, knew who did well, who excelled, and what piteous ones had failed.

Unlike the white high school, Lafayette County Training School distinguished itself by having neither lawn, nor hedges, nor tennis court, nor climbing ivy. Its two buildings (main classrooms, the grade school and home economics) were set on a dirt hill with no fence to limit either its boundaries or those of bordering farms. There was a large expanse to the left of the school which was used alternately as a baseball diamond or basketball court. Rusty hoops on swaying poles represented the permanent recreational equipment, although bats and balls could be borrowed from the P. E. teacher if the borrower was qualified and if the diamond wasn't occupied.

Over this rocky area relieved by a few shady tall persimmon trees the graduating class walked. The girls often held hands and no longer bothered to speak to the lower students. There was a sadness about them, as if this old world was not their home

This selection is from Maya Angelou's memoir *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

1. The town in Arkansas where the author lived.

and they were bound for higher ground. The boys, on the other hand, had become more friendly, more outgoing. A decided change from the closed attitude they projected while studying for finals. Now they seemed not ready to give up the old school, the familiar paths and classrooms. Only a small percentage would be continuing on to college—one of the South's A & M (agricultural and mechanical) schools, which trained Negro youths to be carpenters, farmers, handymen, masons, maids, cooks, and baby nurses. Their future rode heavily on their shoulders, and blinded them to the collective joy that had pervaded the lives of the boys and girls in the grammar school graduating class.

Parents who could afford it had ordered new shoes and ready-made clothes for themselves from Sears and Roebuck or Montgomery Ward. They also engaged the best seamstresses to make the floating graduating dresses and to cut down secondhand pants which would be pressed to a military slickness for the important event.

Oh, it was important, all right. Whitefolks would attend the ceremony, and two or three would speak of God and home, and the Southern way of life, and Mrs. Parsons, the principal's wife, would play the graduation march while the lower-grade graduates paraded down the aisles and took their seats below the platform. The high school seniors would wait in empty classrooms to make their dramatic entrance.

In the Store[2] I was the person of the moment. The birthday girl. The center. Bailey[3] had graduated the year before, although to do so he had had to forfeit all pleasures to make up for his time lost in Baton Rouge.

My class was wearing butter-yellow piqué dresses, and Momma launched out on mine. She smocked the yoke into tiny crisscrossing puckers, then shirred the rest of the bodice. Her dark fingers ducked in and out of the lemony cloth as she embroidered raised daisies around the hem. Before she considered herself finished she had added a crocheted cuff on the puff sleeves, and a pointy crocheted collar.

I was going to be lovely. A walking model of all the various styles of fine hand sewing and it didn't worry me that I was only twelve years old and merely graduating from the eighth grade. Besides, many teachers in Arkansas Negro schools had only that diploma and were licensed to impart wisdom.

The days had become longer and more noticeable. The faded beige of former times had been replaced with strong and sure colors. I began to see my classmates' clothes, their skin tones, and the dust that waved off pussy willows. Clouds that lazed across the sky were objects of great concern to me. Their shiftier shapes might have held a message that in my new happiness and with a little bit of time I'd soon decipher. During that period I looked at the arch of heaven so religiously my neck kept a steady ache. I had taken to smiling more often, and my jaws hurt from the unaccustomed activity. Between the two physical sore spots, I suppose I could have been uncomfortable, but that was not the case. As a member of the winning team (the graduating class of 1940) I had outdistanced unpleasant sensations by miles. I was headed for the freedom of open fields.

Youth and social approval allied themselves with me and we trammeled memories of slights and insults. The wind of our swift passage remodeled my features. Lost tears were pounded to mud and then to dust. Years of withdrawal were brushed aside and left behind, as hanging ropes of parasitic moss.

My work alone had awarded me a top place and I was going to be one of the first called in the graduating ceremonies. On the classroom blackboard, as well as on the bulletin board in the auditorium, there were blue stars and white stars and red stars. No absences, no tardinesses, and my academic work was among the best of the year. I could say the preamble to the Constitution even faster than Bailey. We timed ourselves often: "Wethepeopleofthe UnitedStatesinordertoformamoreperfectunion . . ."

2. The store owned by the author's family.

3. The author's brother.

I had memorized the Presidents of the United States from Washington to Roosevelt in chronological as well as alphabetical order.

My hair pleased me too. Gradually the black mass had lengthened and thickened, so that it kept at last to its braided pattern, and I didn't have to yank my scalp off when I tried to comb it.

Louise and I had rehearsed the exercises until we tired out ourselves. Henry Reed was class valedictorian. He was a small, very black boy with hooded eyes, a long, broad nose, and an oddly shaped head. I had admired him for years because each term he and I vied for the best grades in our class. Most often he bested me, but instead of being disappointed I was pleased that we shared top places between us. Like many Southern Black children, he lived with his grandmother, who was as strict as Momma and as kind as she knew how to be. He was courteous, respectful, and soft-spoken to elders, but on the playground he chose to play the roughest games. I admired him. Anyone, I reckoned, sufficiently afraid or sufficiently dull could be polite. But to be able to operate at a top level with both adults and children was admirable.

His valedictory speech was entitled "To Be or Not to Be." The rigid tenth-grade teacher had helped him write it. He'd been working on the dramatic stresses for months.

The weeks until graduation were filled with heady activities. A group of small children were to be presented in a play about buttercups and daisies and bunny rabbits. They could be heard throughout the building practicing their hops and their little songs that sounded like silver bells. The older girls (nongraduates, of course) were assigned the task of making refreshments for the night's festivities. A tangy scent of ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, and chocolate wafted around the home economics building as the budding cooks made samples for themselves and their teachers.

In every corner of the workshop, axes and saws split fresh timber as the woodshop boys made sets and stage scenery. Only the graduates were left out of the general bustle. We were free to sit in the library at the back of the building or look in quite detachedly, naturally, on the measures being taken for our event.

Even the minister preached on graduation the Sunday before. His subject was, "Let your light so shine that men will see your good works and praise your Father, Who is in Heaven." Although the sermon was purported to be addressed to us, he used the occasion to speak to backsliders, gamblers, and general ne'er-do-wells. But since he had called our names at the beginning of the service we were mollified.

Among Negroes the tradition was to give presents to children going only from one grade to another. How much more important this was when the person was graduating at the top of the class. Uncle Willie and Momma had sent away for a Mickey Mouse watch like Bailey's. Louise gave me four embroidered handkerchiefs. (I gave her crocheted doilies.) Mrs. Sneed, the minister's wife, made me an undershirt to wear for graduation, and nearly every customer gave me a nickel or maybe even a dime with the instruction "Keep on moving to higher ground," or some such encouragement.

Amazingly the great day finally dawned and I was out of bed before I knew it. I threw open the back door to see it more clearly, but Momma said, "Sister, come away from that door and put your robe on."

I hoped the memory of that morning would never leave me. Sunlight was itself young, and the day had none of the insistence maturity would bring it in a few hours. In my robe and barefoot in the backyard, under cover of going to see about my new beans, I gave myself up to the gentle warmth and thanked God that no matter what evil I had done in my life He had allowed me to live to see this day. Somewhere in my fatalism I had expected to die, accidentally, and never have the chance to walk up the stairs in the auditorium and gracefully receive my hard-earned diploma. Out of God's merciful bosom I had won reprieve.

Bailey came out in his robe and gave me a box wrapped in Christmas paper. He said he had saved

his money for mommy to pay for it. It felt like a box of chocolates, but I knew Bailey wouldn't save money to buy candy when we had all we could want under our noses.

He was as proud of the gift as I. It was a soft-leather-bound copy of a collection of poems by Edgar Allan Poe, or, as Bailey and I called him, "Eap." I turned to "Annabel Lee" and we walked up and down the garden rows, the cool dirt between our toes, reciting the beautifully sad lines.

Momma made a Sunday breakfast although it was only Friday. After we finished the blessing, I opened my eyes to find the watch on my plate. It was a dream of a day. Everything went smoothly and to my credit, I didn't have to be reminded or scolded for anything. Near evening I was too jittery to attend to chores, so Bailey volunteered to do all before his bath.

Days before, we had made a sign for the Store, and as we turned out the lights Momma hung the cardboard over the doorknob. It read clearly: CLOSED. GRADUATION.

My dress fitted perfectly and everyone said that I looked like a sunbeam in it. On the hill, going toward the school, Bailey walked behind with Uncle Willie, who muttered, "Go on, Ju." He wanted him to walk ahead with us because it embarrassed him to have to walk so slowly. Bailey said he'd let the ladies walk together, and the men would bring up the rear. We all laughed, nicely.

Little children dashed by out of the dark like fireflies. Their crepe-paper dresses and butterfly wings were not made for running and we heard more than one rip, dryly, and the regretful "uh uh" that followed.

The school blazed without gaiety. The windows seemed cold and unfriendly from the lower hill. A sense of ill-fated timing crept over me, and if Momma hadn't reached for my hand I would have drifted back to Bailey and Uncle Willie, and possibly beyond. She made a few slow jokes about my feet getting cold, and tugged me along to the now-strange building.

Around the front steps, assurance came back. There were my fellow "greats," the graduating class. Hair brushed back, legs oiled, new dresses and pressed pleats, fresh pocket handkerchiefs and little handbags, all homesewn. Oh, we were up to snuff, all right. I joined my comrades and didn't even see my family go in to find seats in the crowded auditorium.

The school band struck up a march and all classes filed in as had been rehearsed. We stood in front of our seats, as assigned, and on a signal from the choir director, we sat. No sooner had this been accomplished than the band started to play the national anthem. We rose again and sang the song, after which we recited the pledge of allegiance. We remained standing for a brief minute before the choir director and the principal signaled to us, rather desperately I thought, to take our seats. The command was so unusual that our carefully rehearsed and smooth-running machine was thrown off. For a full minute we fumbled for our chairs and bumped into each other awkwardly. Habits change or solidify under pressure, so in our state of nervous tension we had been ready to follow our usual assembly pattern: the American national anthem, then the pledge of allegiance, then the song every Black person I knew called the Negro National Anthem.[4] All done in the same key, with the same passion and most often standing on the same foot.

Finding my seat at last, I was overcome with a presentiment of worse things to come. Something unrehearsed, unplanned, was going to happen, and we were going to be made to look bad. I distinctly remember being explicit in the choice of pronoun. It was "we," the graduating class, the unit, that concerned me then.

The principal welcomed "parents and friends" and asked the Baptist minister to lead us in prayer. His invocation was brief and punchy, and for a second I thought we were getting on the high road to right action. When the principal came back to the dais, however, his voice had changed. Sounds

4. "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing."

always affected me profoundly and the principal's voice was one of my favorites. During assembly it melted and lowed weakly into the audience. It had not been in my plan to listen to him, but my curiosity was piqued and I straightened up to give him my attention.

He was talking about Booker T. Washington, our "late great leader," who said we can be as close as the fingers on the hand, etc. . . . Then he said a few vague things about friendship and the friendship of kindly people to those less fortunate than themselves. With that his voice nearly faded, thin, away. Like a river diminishing to a stream and then to a trickle. But he cleared his throat and said, "Our speaker tonight, who is also our friend, came from Texarkana to deliver the commencement address, but due to the irregularity of the train schedule, he's going to, as they say, 'speak and run.' " He said that we understood and wanted the man to know that we were most grateful for the time he was able to give us and then something about how we were willing always to adjust to another's program, and without more ado—"I give you Mr. Edward Donleavy."

Not one but two white men came through the door offstage. The shorter one walked to the speaker's platform, and the tall one moved to the center seat and sat down. But that was our principal's seat, and already occupied. The dislodged gentleman bounced around for a long breath or two before the Baptist minister gave him his chair; then with more dignity than the situation deserved, the minister walked off the stage.

Donleavy looked at the audience once (on reflection, I'm sure that he wanted only to reassure himself that we were really there), adjusted his glasses, and began to read from a sheaf of papers.

He was glad "to be here and to see the work going on just as it was in the other schools."

At the first "Amen" from the audience I willed the offender to immediate death by choking on the word. But Amens and Yes, sir's began to fall around the room like rain through a ragged umbrella.

He told us of the wonderful changes we children in Stamps had in store. The Central School (naturally, the white school was Central) had already been granted improvements that would be in use in the fall. A well-known artist was coming from Little Rock to teach art to them. They were going to have the newest microscopes and chemistry equipment for their laboratory. Mr. Donleavy didn't leave us long in the dark over who made these improvements available to Central High. Nor were we to be ignored in the general betterment scheme he had in mind.

He said that he had pointed out to people at a very high level that one of the first-line football tacklers at Arkansas Agricultural and Mechanical College had graduated from good old Lafayette County Training School. Here fewer Amens were heard. Those few that did break through lay dully in the air with the heaviness of habit.

He went on to praise us. He went on to say how he had bragged that "one of the best basketball players at Fisk sank his first ball right here at Lafayette County Training School."

The white kids were going to have a chance to become Galileos and Madame Curies and Edisons and Gauguins, and our boys (the girls weren't even in on it) would try to be Jesse Owenses and Joe Louises.

Owens and the Brown Bomber were great heroes in our world, but what school official in the white-goddom of Little Rock had the right to decide that those two men must be our only heroes? Who decided that for Henry Reed to become a scientist he had to work like George Washington Carver, as a bootblack, to buy a lousy microscope? Bailey was obviously always going to be too small to be an athlete, so which concrete angel glued to what country seat had decided that if my brother wanted to become a lawyer he had to first pay penance for his skin by picking cotton and hoeing corn and studying correspondence books at night for twenty years?

The man's dead words fell like bricks around the auditorium and too many settled in my belly. Constrained by hard-learned manners I couldn't

look behind me, but to my left and right the proud graduating class of 1940 had dropped their heads. Every girl in my row had found something new to do with her handkerchief. Some folded the tiny squares into love knots, some into triangles, but most were wadding them, then pressing them flat on their yellow laps.

On the dais, the ancient tragedy was being replayed. Professor Parsons sat, a sculptor's reject, rigid. His large, heavy body seemed devoid of will or willingness, and his eyes said he was no longer with us. The other teachers examined the flag (which was draped stage right) or their notes, or the windows which opened on our now-famous playing diamond.

Graduation, the hush-hush magic time of frills and gifts and congratulations and diplomas, was finished for me before my name was called. The accomplishment was nothing. The meticulous maps, drawn in three colors of ink, learning and spelling decasyllabic words, memorizing the whole of *The Rape of Lucrece*—it was for nothing. Donleavy had exposed us.

We were maids and farmers, handymen and washerwomen, and anything higher that we aspired to was farcical and presumptuous.

Then I wished that Gabriel Prosser and Nat Turner had killed all whitefolks in their beds and that Abraham Lincoln had been assassinated before the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, and that Harriet Tubman had been killed by that blow on her head and Christopher Columbus had drowned in the *Santa Maria*.

It was awful to be a Negro and have no control over my life. It was brutal to be young and already trained to sit quietly and listen to charges brought against my color with no chance of defense. We should all be dead. I thought I should like to see us all dead, one on top of the other. A pyramid of flesh with the whitefolks on the bottom, as the broad base, then the Indians with their silly tomahawks and teepees and wigwams and treaties, the Negroes with their mops and recipes and cotton sacks and spirituals sticking out of their mouths. The Dutch children should all stumble in their wooden shoes and break their necks. The French should choke to death on the Louisiana Purchase (1803) while silkworms ate all the Chinese with their stupid pigtails. As a species, we were an abomination. All of us.

Donleavy was running for election, and assured our parents that if he won we could count on having the only colored paved playing field in that part of Arkansas. Also—he never looked up to acknowledge the grunts of acceptance—also, we were bound to get some new equipment for the home economics building and the workshop.

He finished, and since there was no need to give any more than the most perfunctory thank-you's, he nodded to the men on the stage, and the tall white man who was never introduced joined him at the door. They left with the attitude that now they were off to something really important. (The graduation ceremonies at Lafayette County Training School had been a mere preliminary.)

The ugliness they left was palpable. An uninvited guest who wouldn't leave. The choir was summoned and sang a modern arrangement of "Onward, Christian Soldiers," with new words pertaining to graduates seeking their place in the world. But it didn't work. Elouise, the daughter of the Baptist minister, recited "Invictus," and I could have cried at the impertinence of "I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul."

My name had lost its ring of familiarity and I had to be nudged to go and receive my diploma. All my preparations had fled. I neither marched up to the stage like a conquering Amazon, nor did I look in the audience for Bailey's nod of approval. Marguerite Johnson. I heard the name again, my honors were read, there were noises in the audience of appreciation, and I took my place on the stage as rehearsed.

I thought about colors I hated: ecru, puce, lavender, beige, and black.

There was shuffling and rustling around me, then Henry Reed was giving his valedictory address, "To Be or Not to Be." Hadn't he heard the whitefolks? We couldn't *be*, so the question was a waste of

time. Henry's voice came out clear and strong. I feared to look at him. Hadn't he got the message? There was no "nobler in the mind" for Negroes because the world didn't think we had minds, and they let us know it. "Outrageous fortune"? Now, that was a joke. When the ceremony was over I had to tell Henry Reed some things. That is, if I still cared. Not "rub," Henry, "erase." "Ah, there's the erase." Us.

Henry had been a good student in elocution. His voice rose on tides of promise and fell on waves of warnings. The English teacher had helped him to create a sermon winging through Hamlet's soliloquy. To be a man, a doer, a builder, a leader, or to be a tool, an unfunny joke, a crusher of funky toadstools. I marveled that Henry could go through with the speech as if we had a choice.

I had been listening and silently rebutting each sentence with my eyes closed; then there was a hush, which in an audience warns that something unplanned is happening. I looked up and saw Henry Reed, the conservative, the proper, the A student, turn his back to the audience and turn to us (the proud graduating class of 1940) and sing, nearly speaking,

"Lift ev'ry voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty . . ."

It was the poem written by James Weldon Johnson. It was the music composed by J. Rosamond Johnson. It was the Negro national anthem. Out of habit we were singing it.

Our mothers and fathers stood in the dark hall and joined the hymn of encouragement. A kindergarten teacher led the small children onto the stage and the buttercups and daisies and bunny rabbits marked time and tried to follow:

"Stony the road we trod
Bitter the chastening rod
Felt in the days when hope, unborn, had died.
Yet with a steady beat
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?"

Each child I knew had learned that song with his ABC's and along with "Jesus Loves Me This I Know." But I personally had never heard it before. Never heard the words, despite the thousands of times I had sung them. Never thought they had anything to do with me.

On the other hand, the words of Patrick Henry had made such an impression on me that I had been able to stretch myself tall and trembling and say, "I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death."

And now I heard, really for the first time:

"We have come over a way that with tears
has been watered.
We have come, treading our path through
the blood of the slaughtered."

While echoes of the song shivered in the air, Henry Reed bowed his head, said "Thank you," and returned to his place in the line. The tears that slipped down many faces were not wiped away in shame.

We were on top again. As always, again. We survived. The depths had been icy and dark, but now a bright sun spoke to our souls. I was no longer simply a member of the proud graduating class of 1940; I was a proud member of the wonderful, beautiful Negro race.

Oh, Black known and unknown poets, how often have your auctioned pains sustained us? Who will compute the lonely nights made less lonely by your songs, or the empty pots made less tragic by your tales?

If we were a people much given to revealing secrets, we might raise monuments and sacrifice to the memories of our poets, but slavery cured us of that weakness. It may be enough, however, to have it said that we survive in exact relationship to the dedication of our poets (include preachers, musicians, and blues singers).

Interpretive Questions

1. Why does singing the Negro national anthem restore Marguerite's and her people's faith? Why does Marguerite say that she had never truly heard the Negro national anthem before the graduation, even though she had sung it many times?

2. Why is it a child—Henry Reed—who saves the ceremony by leading the class in singing the Negro national anthem?

3. Why does Donleavy's speech make Marguerite start to hate the whole human race? Why does believing that the graduation is meaningless make Marguerite think that all her learning is meaningless, too?

4. Why do the citizens of Stamps treat graduation as a major event if they know that its "promise" is largely empty? Why do the adults tell Marguerite to "keep on moving to higher ground"?

5. Why does Marguerite say that her people survive in exact relationship to the dedication of their poets?

Evaluative Questions

1. Is education the key to advancement in America?

2. What do we need to do today to inspire our children and keep their faith in America strong?

3. Why has an equal, quality education for all been so difficult to achieve in America?

A GATHERING OF EQUALS

The Great Books Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities invite all Americans to join in **A Gathering of Equals,** a conversation about the nature of American pluralism and identity. What does it mean to be an American? How are our notions of identity affected by the complexities of our lives today and by our many different relationships and allegiances? Is America to become a nation whose citizens think of themselves first as members of an ethnic community, race, or culture, and only second as Americans? What holds our diverse society together?

This conversation is an opportunity for Americans of all backgrounds to study, learn, and speak face-to-face about our differences—of race, ethnicity, and culture—as well as about the values we share as Americans. The Great Books Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities hope that many voices—new and old—will become part of conversations on issues at the heart of American democracy.

The Great Books Foundation

For more information about the Great Books Foundation and its reading programs for children and adults, please call 1-800-222-5870.

A GATHERING OF EQUALS

Guide for Leaders

"For too long, we have let what divides us capture the headlines and sound bites, polarizing us rather than bringing us together. I am proposing a national conversation open to all Americans, a conversation in which all voices are heard and in which we grapple seriously with the meaning of American pluralism."

Sheldon Hackney, chairman
National Endowment for the Humanities

Sponsored by the Great Books Foundation and the Great Books Councils of Philadelphia, Chicago, and San Francisco.

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A GATHERING OF EQUALS

Guide for Leaders

The purpose of this guide is to help junior high and high school Great Books leaders enable their students to participate thoughtfully in *A Gathering of Equals: A National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity*, sponsored by the Great Books Foundation and funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. As a trained Great Books leader, you are in a unique position to help your students get the most from their participation in this national conversation through *shared inquiry*, a method of learning that exemplifies the principles upon which democracy is founded. By using the project readings as the focal point of study and reflection for your students, you will be giving them the opportunity to participate in an intellectual endeavor that reaches beyond individual classrooms to embrace the country as a whole.

Planning Your Project

Each of the texts for *A Gathering of Equals* treats central ideas and issues in American political history and culture and will support thoughtful analysis for three to five classroom periods. Shared inquiry discussions of these texts can be integrated into such courses as American literature, history, or government. You may choose to discuss all of the selections in the booklet, or pick a few that you think will be of particular interest to your students.

The interpretive reading, writing, and discussion activities suggested in this guide will aid you in planning your schedule. In addition, the booklet of readings contains interpretive and evaluative questions that will help you prepare to lead your discussions. As part of the project, you may want to have students write longer research papers or engage in classroom or schoolwide debates. A bibliography of pertinent secondary readings is included for this purpose, as well as a list of overarching questions on American pluralism and identity (see next page).

Extending the Conversation

A Gathering of Equals presents a good opportunity to involve more students and teachers in your Great Books discussions. You may want to collaborate with another teacher, perhaps from a different discipline, and conduct a shared inquiry discussion of one of the selections with his or her students, or combine classes during the project. You could involve your principal or the whole school in the national conversation, perhaps planning a National Conversation Week in which all students read and discuss several project texts, such as Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address or King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail," culminating in a schoolwide essay contest, debate, or assembly.

Consider involving parents, too, by inviting them to participate with students in one of your discussions. Some parents may already have heard about the NEH's commitment to a national conversation, and be interested in the project booklet and the aims of *A Gathering of Equals*.

We encourage you to be creative in thinking up projects that will extend the conversation beyond your classroom to the school and the community. The following list of questions on American pluralism and identity invite a response to the central themes of *A Gathering of Equals*, and can provide a focus for a larger project. These questions can also be used by your students as the basis of a culminating discussion or writing project that gives them an opportunity to reflect on their participation in *A Gathering of Equals* and what they have learned from their discussions. In responding to these questions, students might refer to several selections from the booklet, incorporate any research they have done, include new ideas they have heard, or relate project themes to their personal experiences or current events.

Questions on American Pluralism and Identity

1. What does it mean to be an American? What did it mean in the past, what does it mean right now, and what will it mean in the twenty-first century? Has the definition of what it means to be an American changed?
2. What is our image of the America of the future? Is America becoming a nation whose citizens think of themselves first as members of an ethnic

community, race, or culture, and only second as Americans? Can America be a land of shared values and commitments that nonetheless retains cultural differences?

3. What holds our diverse society together? What are our values—shared and not shared? What are the values and commitments we need to share or develop to have a successful democratic society?

4. Can different peoples ever fully trust and understand one another while maintaining their distinct ethnic identities? To whom does a person owe loyalty in a pluralistic America—to his or her cultural group, or to the nation?

5. Is democracy stronger when Americans think of themselves as being one people, or as being many different groups of people?

Interpretive Activities for *A Gathering of Equals*

At the beginning of your project, you will want to explain to students that they are participating in a national conversation on American pluralism and identity that is being funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Let them know that adults and students across the nation are participating in the project by holding discussions based on the selections in their booklet. You may want to review some of the information about the purpose of *A Gathering of Equals* that appears in the project booklet, as well as some of the questions about American pluralism and identity that they will be thinking about.

The interpretive activities suggested here are similar to those provided in the Leader's Guide published for each Great Books series. You may want to review your Leader's Guide, or the *Introduction to Shared Inquiry* handbook from your training course, for a more detailed explanation of how to conduct the activities.

Prereading questions are designed to be discussed briefly prior to students' first reading of the selection. Sharing ideas about one of these questions will help students connect the text to their previous experience, lay the groundwork for a personal response, and give students a logical context for their first encounter with the text.

The *first reading* of several of the shorter selections can easily be done in class. We encourage you to consider an oral reading if possible, even for older students, to make the reading a shared event and to bring the text to life.

After the first reading, set aside some time for *sharing questions.* Encouraging students to ask questions about a selection is an excellent way to involve them in interpretive thinking, and greatly increases their comprehension of the selection.

Note-taking suggestions are provided to motivate and enrich students' *second reading* of the selection. (Where two note-taking suggestions are offered, you may choose the one you prefer, or use one for the first reading and the other for the second.) Taking notes will encourage students to read actively, help them follow the development of a complex argument, assist them in making connections between different parts of the text, and foster their ability to call up supporting evidence for their opinions. If you allow students time for *sharing notes,* the suggested follow-up questions will help you draw out different responses and encourage students to elaborate on the thinking underlying their notes. Passages for *textual analysis* are also suggested for each selection.

The questions and essay topics for *writing after discussion* will enable students to continue to engage thoughtfully with issues and ideas raised by the selections. Students may write a paragraph or two, or a more extended piece.

The Declaration of Independence

Introduce the selection by having students share briefly what they already know about the Declaration of Independence and why it was written.

Prereading Questions

1. Why do people have a right to be free?
2. Why is it hard to get people to recognize that they have been treating you unfairly?

Note-taking Suggestion

On their second reading, ask students to:

> Mark places where you think the signers of the Declaration of Independence give a good reason why they should revolt.

Follow-up question when sharing notes: *Why do you think this is a good reason?*

Passages for Textual Analysis

Page 5: beginning, "When in the course of human events," and ending, "let facts be submitted to a candid world."

Pages 6-7: beginning, "In every stage of these oppressions," to the end of the selection.

Writing After Discussion

1. Do you agree that everyone is created equal?
2. Is democracy stronger when Americans think of themselves as "one people," or as many distinct groups of people?
3. Has America lived up to the idea that all people are created equal with unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?
4. Would you agree with American patriot Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty, or give me death"?

Topics for Further Study

- The events leading up to the Declaration of Independence
- The life and career of one of the signers of the Declaration (for example, Thomas Jefferson)
- The different peoples comprising the American population in 1776

The Constitution of the United States
Preamble and Bill of Rights

Introduce the selection by reminding students that the U.S. Constitution provides the fundamental laws of the land, and that the Bill of Rights is the foundation of our primary freedoms as citizens. Make sure students understand that the Bill of Rights is not the whole document, but the name we give to the first ten amendments to the Constitution.

Prereading Questions

1. What are some of your rights as an individual?
2. What does it mean to say that Americans live in a free country?

Note-taking Suggestion

On their second reading, ask students to:

> Mark specific rights Americans have that you feel are especially important to living in a free country.

Follow-up questions when sharing notes: *Why is it important for citizens to have this right in a free country? What is an example of how this right might be violated?*

Passage for Textual Analysis

Page 8: beginning, "We the people," and ending, "and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

You might also have students discuss particular amendments in small groups, and consider why the authors of the Constitution thought these amendments were important.

Writing After Discussion

1. Have students pick an article of the Bill of Rights that is the subject of controversy today; for example, the right to keep and bear arms (gun control), the right of free speech (restrictions on hate language), or freedom of religion (school prayer). Then ask students to write an essay describing the controversy and defending their own position.
2. Have students create a "Students' Bill of Rights" for their school. They could begin by breaking into small groups to brainstorm their fundamental rights as students, and conclude with a student Constitutional Convention in which they need a two-thirds majority to pass their Bill of Rights.
3. Have students suggest a new amendment to the Constitution, debate it in class, and then vote on whether or not it should be adopted. Students can think of their own amendment, or use examples of issues currently under consideration as constitutional amendments, such as allowing prayer in schools, making it illegal to burn the American flag as a form of protest, or imposing term limits for members of Congress.

Topics for Further Study

- The full text of the U.S. Constitution and the process by which amendments to the Constitution are passed or defeated
- The Articles of Confederation, the Constitutional Convention, and the passage of the Bill of Rights
- The constitutions of emerging democracies in Europe and Africa

The Federalist No. 10

James Madison

Madison's essay will probably be the most challenging selection in the booklet for your students, so you may want to include it only if your students are advanced or particularly able readers.

Introduce the first reading of the selection by going over with students the footnote on page 10, which explains briefly what the Federalist Papers were and what the authors hoped to accomplish by writing them. Students should understand that the ratification of the Constitution was controversial, and that Madison is writing in support of it. In this essay, he is addressing the problem of how different groups—or factions, as he calls them—can peacefully coexist in a democracy.

After the first reading, you may want to have students get together in small groups to discuss words or passages that they find especially difficult to understand; for example, the passage on page 10, "but it would be an unwarrantable partiality, to contend that they have as effectually obviated the danger on this side, as was wished and expected." Alternatively, you may want to allow time for students to discuss in small groups one of the passages for textual analysis.

Prereading Questions

Write on the board:

faction

- a group of people united by a common economic interest or a fervent dedication to some cause or issue
- a party or clique that is contentious or divisive

Then ask students, *What are some different factions that exist in America today? Why is it difficult for these factions to reconcile their differences?*

Note-taking Suggestions

On their first reading, ask students to:

Mark places where Madison sees a danger or a problem for democracy.

Follow-up question when sharing notes: *Why does Madison see a problem for democracy here?*

On their second reading, ask students to:

> Mark places where Madison gives a good reason to adopt a representative form of government, rather than a "pure" democracy.

Follow-up question when sharing notes: *Why do you think Madison gives a good reason here?*

Passages for Textual Analysis

Page 10: beginning, "Among the numerous advantages," and ending, "a factious spirit has tainted our public administrations."

Page 11: beginning, "The second expedient is as impracticable as the first would be unwise," and ending, "involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of the government."

Page 12: beginning, "From this view of the subject," and ending, "their opinions, and their passions."

Writing After Discussion

1. Do you think that the different racial and ethnic groups in America represent factions that will never fully trust one another, or is our identity as Americans strong enough to overcome our differences?
2. Do you agree with Madison that representative democracy is a better form of government than "pure democracy"?
3. What are some issues that divide your school, and what are some factions that have arisen as a result? How could these issues be resolved?
4. Can people who are disadvantaged financially or educationally still share in the American dream of liberty and justice for all?

Topics for Further Study

- The Federalist/Anti-Federalist debate regarding the adoption of the Constitution
- The different possible forms of government, such as monarchy, oligarchy, military dictatorship, etc.
- Plato's sceptical view of democracy in Book VIII of *The Republic*

SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS
Abraham Lincoln

Introduce the selection by telling students that the speech was given in March of 1865, very near the end of the American Civil War. Explain that in the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1863, which is referred to in the selection, Lincoln declared slaves in the Southern states to be free.

Because of the particular beauty and power of Lincoln's oratory, we especially encourage you to conduct the first reading out loud. You could also have one or more students prepare a dramatic reading.

Prereading Questions

1. What does the phrase "Judge not lest ye be judged" mean? Why is it hard to live according to this principle?
2. Why is it hard to forgive someone after a fight and be good friends?

Note-taking Suggestion

On their second reading, ask students to:

> Mark places where Lincoln suggests that the Civil War could have been avoided, and places where he suggests it was unavoidable.

Follow-up question when sharing notes: *Why does Lincoln suggest that the war was avoidable (or unavoidable) here?*

Passage for Textual Analysis

Page 17: beginning, "With malice toward none;" to the end of the selection.

Writing After Discussion

1. Why does Lincoln suggest that both the North and the South are responsible for this "mighty scourge," this "terrible war"?
2. Are Americans as deeply divided today as in the time of Lincoln?
3. Is it time for Americans to forgive each other for past wrongs, and "judge not that we be not judged"? Why would this be difficult?
4. Do you think that people who are not satisfied with America should be allowed to live separately as they wish—to secede from the Union?
5. How was the attempted secession of the Southern states prior to the Civil War different from the secession of the colonies from Great Britain?

Topics for Further Study

- The life and speeches of black abolitionist Frederick Douglass
- Lincoln's decision to issue the Emancipation Proclamation and the reaction on both sides
- Reconstruction and the aftermath of the Civil War for whites and blacks; the fate of Lincoln's hope "to bind up the nation's wounds" and for people to act "with malice toward none; with charity for all"
- The major events and grim statistics of the Civil War
- Other famous inaugural speeches (e.g., by John F. Kennedy, Franklin D. Roosevelt)

Letter from Birmingham Jail

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Introduce the selection by drawing students' attention to the author's note, in which Dr. King describes the circumstances under which he wrote his letter. You might also want to have students share briefly what they know about the civil rights movement.

Prereading Questions

1. Do people have an obligation to obey laws that are unjust?
2. What do you think is meant by the statement, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere"?
3. Why do some people turn to violence to attempt to solve their problems, while others believe in nonviolence?

Note-taking Suggestions

On their first reading, ask students to:

> Mark places where you admire something that Dr. King says.

Follow-up question when sharing notes: *Why do you admire what Dr. King says here?*

On their second reading, ask students to:

> Mark places where Dr. King seems confident in his ability to help lead Americans to "understanding and brotherhood," and places where he seems to doubt his ability.

Follow-up question when sharing notes: *Why do you think Dr. King seems confident in (or doubting of) his ability here?*

Passages for Textual Analysis

Pages 18-19: beginning, "While confined here," and ending, "never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds."

Pages 19-20: beginning, "You may well ask," and ending, "in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue."

Pages 21-22: beginning, "You express a great deal of anxiety," and ending, "expressing the highest respect for law."

Writing After Discussion

1. Has America been successful or unsuccessful in achieving Dr. King's dream of racial justice and harmony? Are race relations better now than they were during the time of the civil rights movement?
2. How can good relations between races be achieved? What stands in the way and how can these obstacles be overcome? (Students may want to consider American society as a whole or think about the question as it applies to their school.)
3. Dr. King writes that "there is a type of constructive nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth." Describe a time when something that made you uncomfortable—that caused you "a tension in the mind"—resulted in your growth.
4. Do you think that you could live your life according to the principle of nonviolence? Do you think that most people could do so, or only a few exceptional people like Dr. King?
5. Do you think there will always be distrust between people of different races, classes, and cultures?
6. Does there come a time when violent protest, or even revolt, is justified in the face of a long string of abuses? What would the signers of the Declaration of Independence say to Dr. King's philosophy of nonviolence?

Topics for Further Study

- The history of the civil rights movement in the United States
- The life and writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- The philosopy of passive resistance
- The events and people referred to in "Letter from Birmingham Jail"

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION
Maya Angelou

Introduce the selection by telling students that this story is by the African American poet Maya Angelou, and is from her memoir *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

Prereading Questions

1. How important to a young person's success or failure is the opinion of teachers and parents about his or her future?
2. Why do countries have national anthems? How does singing their national anthem make people feel?

Note-taking Suggestion

On their second reading, ask students to:

> Mark places where Marguerite is feeling connected to her people, and places where she is feeling separate from them.

Follow-up question when sharing notes: *Why is Marguerite feeling connected to (or separate from) her people here?*

Passages for Textual Analysis

Pages 29–30: beginning, "Unlike the white high school," and ending, "to make their dramatic entrance."

Page 34: beginning, "On the dais," and ending, "As a species we were an abomination. All of us."

Page 35: beginning, "I had been listening," to the end of the story.

Writing After Discussion

1. In writing this story, do you think that the author primarily wants to change the attitudes of white people or the attitudes of black people?
2. How are the problems that young African American graduates face today like and unlike those that Marguerite faced?
3. Why has an equal, quality education for all been so difficult to achieve in America?
4. Have you ever felt disillusioned? What restored your faith?
5. Write the valedictory speech *you* would give after listening to Mr. Donleavy speak.

Topics for Further Study

- The history of school desegregation
- The "separate but equal" philosophy and why it failed
- African American poets, artists, and musicians

Bibliography

The following bibliography of related works for further study has been prepared by Dr. John J. Patrick, professor of education and director of the Social Studies Development Center at Indiana University. You will find these texts useful for students who have become interested in further historical research following their shared inquiry discussions of the primary readings in the project booklet.

Anastaplo, George. *The Constitution of 1787: A Commentary.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989. This lucid section-by-section commentary on the U.S. Constitution includes an insightful chapter on the document's Preamble, its meaning, origin, and significance in United States history.

Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.* New York: Random House, 1970. Also available in paperback from Bantam Books. Maya Angelou writes movingly about her youth in the rural South during an era of racial discrimination and segregation. She tells of her fears and hopes as the country moves into a new desegregated era.

Becker, Carl L. *The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942. Here is a clear explanation of the origin of the key ideas in the Declaration, and their impact on American history.

Bernstein, Richard B., and Jerome Agel. *Amending America: If We Love the Constitution So Much, Why Do We Keep Trying to Change It?* New York: Times Books, 1993. This fascinating history of amendments to the U.S. Constitution can be used with a study of the Bill of Rights, or with a study of the subsequent efforts to change the Constitution to more adequately secure the rights of individuals as called for by the Declaration of Independence.

Bonwick, Colin. *The American Revolution.* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991. This brief, comprehensive history of the American Revolution provides background for further analysis and discussion of such founding documents as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, *The Federalist*, and the Bill of Rights.

Bowen, Catherine Drinker. *Miracle at Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention, May to September, 1787.* Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1966. Reprinted in 1986. This beautifully written account of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 will enrich analysis and discussion of American founding documents, such as *The Federalist* and the Bill of Rights.

Branch, Taylor. *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988. This acclaimed treatment of the civil rights movement and the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr., provides further background for analysis of primary sources, such as King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and Maya Angelou's "High School Graduation."

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